

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this application as presently amended and in light of the following discussion is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 and 26-37 are presently active; Claims 6-25 have been withdrawn by a Restriction Requirement, Claim 1 has been amended to address an informality, and Claims 30-37 have been added by way of the present amendment. No new matter has been added.¹

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1 and 26-27 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Futagawa et al (Jap. Pat. Publ. No. 2000-129442). Claims 2-5 and 28-29 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a0) as being unpatentable over Futagawa et al in view of Iwasaki et al (U.S. Pat. No. 5,174,881). In particular, Futagawa et al was applied for their teaching of a multi-chamber vacuum handling system connected to a deposition chamber, and Iwasaki et al was applied for their teaching of a chemical oxide removal (COR) system which the Office Action acknowledged was not taught by Futagawa et al.

Claim 1 recites:

A processed object processing apparatus that processes objects to be processed, comprising:

first and second treatment systems that are communicably and adjacently connected to each other and in which the objects to be processed are processed; and

one load lock system that is communicably and adjacently connected to said second treatment system, said one load lock system having ***a transfer arm that transfers the objects to be processed into and out of each of said first and second treatment systems*** and a processed object holding part holding the object to be processed;

wherein said second treatment systems is a vacuum treatment system, and said one load lock system is disposed in a position ***such as to form a line with said first and second treatment systems***. [Emphasis added]

Accordingly, Claim 1 defines that “the one load lock system” has “the transfer arm that transfers the objects to be processed into and out of each of the first and second treatment

¹ Support for the feature sin the new claims are found in Applicants' Figure 2, 3A, and 3B and the discussion thereof at pages 28-29 and 35-38.

systems.” Claim 2 defines similar features as Claim 1, but includes a recitation of a chemical oxide removal system. By virtue of this construction, the operation of transferring objects to be processed between respective ones of the treatment systems can be simplified, and hence a plurality of processes can be carried out efficiently.

Futagawa et al relates to a vacuum film forming apparatus which transfers substrates between a plurality of treatment chambers disposed along a transferring line for the transferred substrates and carries out a film forming process on the substrates.² In Futagawa et al, the apparatus includes 1) a pair of a load chamber 1 and an unload chamber 7 facing each other, 2) a pair of a heating chamber 3 and a third film forming chamber 6 facing each other, and 3) a pair of a first film forming chamber 4 and a second film forming chamber 5 facing each other. These three pairs are disposed along a straight line, as disclosed in numbered paragraph [0059] of the translation of Futagawa et al and as shown in Figure 1 of Futagawa et al.

Moreover, a holder 9 holds a substrate 8 on which a film is formed.³ The substrate is transferred in order of the load chamber 1, the heating chamber 3, the first film forming chamber 4, a turning chamber 10, the second film forming chamber 5, the third film forming chamber 6 and the unload chamber 7.⁴ Further, a desorption robot 23 attaches the substrate 8 to the holder 9, as described in numbered paragraph [0067] of Futagawa et al. Alternatively, a substrate transfer equipment 14 attaches and detaches the substrate 8 to and from the holder 9.⁵

M.P.E.P. § 2131 requires for anticipation that each and every feature of the claimed invention must be shown and requires for anticipation that the identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the claim. Yet, Futagawa et al neither disclose

² See numbered paragraph [0001] of the translation of Futagawa et al, lines 1 to 3.

³ See numbered paragraph [0063] of Futagawa et al, lines 3 to 4.

⁴ See numbered paragraphs [0070] to [0076].

⁵ See numbered paragraph [0125], lines 3 to 4, of Futagawa et al.

nor suggest a mechanism for transferring substrate 8 between these chambers. More specifically, Futagawa et al neither disclose nor suggest a load chamber 1 having a transfer arm, as would be required for Futagawa et al to anticipate Claims 1 and 2.

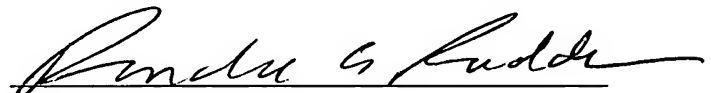
Furthermore, the deficiencies in Futagawa et al are not overcome by Iwasaki et al. In fact, Iwasaki et al neither disclose nor suggest two treatment systems being adjacently connected to each other and one load lock system being adjacently connected to one treatment system. More specifically, Iwasaki et al neither disclose nor suggest a load lock system having a transfer arm and a processed object holding part, or a transfer arm transferring objects to be processed into and out of each of two treatment systems.

Accordingly, these features are neither disclosed nor suggested in Futagawa et al or Iwasaki et al. Hence, Claims 1 and 2 (and the claims dependent therefrom) are believed to be patentable over the applied art.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussions, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

OBLON, SPIVAK, McCLELLAND,
MAIER & NEUSTADT, P.C.



Steven P. Weihrouch
Attorney of Record
Registration No. 32,829

Customer Number
22850

Tel: (703) 413-3000
Fax: (703) 413 -2220
(OSMMN 06/04)

Ronald A. Rudder, Ph.D.
Registration No. 45,618